SHAPE America TOY Website Questionnaire

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Questions
Describe one or two of the newest and/or most innovative activities that you do with your students in physical education? (i.e. instructional units, assessment strategies/techniques, development of personal/social skills, parent/family involvement, special events, etc)

As the world of fitness is evolving, so to we are evolving at Toano Middle School. The Toano Fitness Learning Lab was created to provide our students with learning experience that was unlike anything we had provided before. Our ultimate goal was to provide a learning experience for our students that would allow them to be able to go into our community and utilize fitness training equipment in meaningful ways. More importantly, we want to teach student how to use cardio equipment such as elliptical trainers, rowers, and programmable bikes in ways that are safe and will benefit his/her personal fitness. While it is so easy to tell students what it takes to become a healthy and fit person, it is so much more effective to provide the hands on experience that students can take into their personal lives.

In the learning environment that we created through grant funding and seed money from our administration we instruct student in both interval and circuit training. Teaching and learning includes the technical aspects of muscular strength and endurance training, assessing exercise intensity utilizing heart rate monitors, creative exergaming (BOSU™ Tennis anyone?) high-intensity interval training, and assessing training performance using RPE.

What is your particular expertise in regard to teaching physical education – what is the focus of your teaching?
I believe that instruction and assessment are my particular strengths as a teacher. My attention to creating innovative, engaging lessons that challenge students while also developing skills on a continuum from beginning to advanced levels. I enjoy breaking down individual skills into teachable skill components and arranging student practice to work on those individual components. Assessing those components becomes a key cog in guiding continuing instruction. Putting those skill component together and utilizing them in lead up and small sided games helps students gain confidence in his/her skill abilities as part of the learning process. My work on assessment includes developing both formative and summative skills assessments, skill task cards, reflective writing, and use of student portfolios.

In addition, finding ways to implement various forms of technology into instruction is also something we strive to do. Whether it is tracking moderate to vigorous
activity time using pedometers, having students researching and developing fitness plans using a WebQuest, or demonstrating apps on a tablet to help the student with his/her personal fitness, we are always exploring ways to utilize the most up-to-date technology to enhance student learning.

**What is your philosophy for physical education – what do you believe in?**

I believe as a teacher that our ultimate goal is to provide students with the knowledge and skill they will need to live a long and healthy life. That encompasses the ongoing assessment of our curriculum and instructional lessons to make sure they align with national and state standards. I believe teachers need to be reflective about instruction and student learning and constantly be willing to create new and engaging lessons that are always focused on utilizing instructional time to the fullest with the least amount of talk time and the most amount of student activity and practice that can be accomplished. Each year for the last 10 years I have shared with my 8th grade student the growing health epidemic that is childhood obesity and discussed with them how this problem could potentially affect them in the long-term. Ultimately my goal as a physical educator to grow students that will completely turn around those trends in the opposite direction.

**What does being a physical education Teacher of the Year mean to you?**

I am completely honored and humbled to be named to such a prestigious award. I believe the award is more of a reflection of our school community and our team of teachers that desire to seek and find innovative ways of educating students. It’s more of an affirmation that what we do here is reaching kids and helping them become healthy adults. I have been extremely blessed to work in a great school community that has encouraged innovative teaching and that cares about the health of our students.

**What do you do to help other physical education teachers plan and implement exemplary programs?**

I have been able to provide numerous staff development workshops and presentations within our school, school division, and our state. Those sessions have included presentations on quality physical education, developing quality lessons, assessing student learning, developing student fitness plans, team building, use of pedometers and heart rate monitors, and engaging student learning. In addition, within our school division, I have been a part of multiple curriculum writing teams and through those processes developed a file sharing system in which lessons, assessments and student learning activities are shared amongst all of our physical education teachers. We have hosted multiple schools at our school to observe how we conduct our program and how our model positively affects student learning.

Lastly, I have always continued my own personal growth as a teacher. Attending professional development conferences is a key part of how we are able to continue to grow our program. I am consistently seeking new innovations in our field and bringing them back to our school to implement. After implementation in our school, these innovations are then moved into the other middle schools in our school division. Toano Middle School was the first school in our division to implement climbing walls(3), inline
skating, mountain biking, pedometers, heart rate monitors, fitness lab, suspension training, and exergaming to name a few.

Any quotes from students about you as a physical education teacher, or the classes taught by you?
One of the biggest rewards I have had as a teacher has been when students have been introduced to an activity for the first time in my class and come back to share that they have done the activity at home. Each year, I ask my 8th grade student to complete a Life Goal Plan. I ask them to tell me what they aspire to do at 4 different life points including 3, 5, 10, and 20 years in the future. At the conclusion of the assignment, I require students to reflect on what they learned from the completing the project. Each year, several students thank me for making them do the project because it made them think about some things they had not considered about where they wanted their life to be. I am blessed to work with a 6th grade teacher that was my student several years ago. Each year she tells her students that I was her Physical Education teacher. She warns them, “be ready, he’s going to make you work hard.’ I take that as a supreme compliment.

List three of your “favorite” conference session titles that you have presented, with a brief description of each.

Welcome to My World of ‘Pedometry’
This session provides a detailed session on how to implement pedometers into the physical education classroom. It includes organization, classroom management strategies, and instructional lessons and activities to get teachers and students using pedometers on a daily basis.

Stepping Up Your Student MVPa Time
One of the biggest challenges in our class is getting students to understand what it means to be active at moderate to vigorous levels. Within this session, strategies and tips are modeled that have proven to help students to up their intensity levels. Using high-intensity interval training, heart rate monitors, and innovative instant activities are part of the session.

Assessment: Do they know what you think they know?
Participants evaluate and discuss the connections between instruction, assessing learning, and grading. Exploration of affective ways of assessing learning, the importance of formative assessment to student learning, and the significance of effective teacher feedback in the learning process are all part of the program.

Any additional major teaching awards you have received:

- VAHPERD Middle School Teacher of the Year, 1996
- Williamsburg-James City County Middle School Teacher of the Year, 2001
- Middle School Technology Educator of the Year, WHRO Consortium for Interactive Instruction, 2008